

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 299061

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 299061

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, JA

SUBJECT: OPERATION CLEAN SLATE

"FOLLOWING IS A REPEAT

QUOTE

P 071902Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9355

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 CARACAS 6880

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, VE

SUBJECT: OPERATION CLEAN SLATE

REF STATE 144163

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PAGE 02 STATE 299061

FOR EAGLEBURGER AND ROGERS ONLY FROM AMBASSADOR

1. MY RESPONSE IS BY NECESSITY IMPRESSIONISTIC. TWO
MONTHS, LARGELY TAKEN UP BY OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES, ARE NOT

SUFFICIENT FOR THE KIND OF CAREFUL LOOK AT OUR OPERATIONS IN CARACAS YOUR INTERESTING PROJECT MERITS. BUT I CAN OFFER THESE PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY ARE NO MORE THAN THAT.

2. STRUCTURE RATHER THAN STAFFING IS WHERE I WOULD START, WHAT WE NEED HERE IS AN ORGANIZATION THAT REFLECTS OUR REAL INTERESTS AND PRIORITIES AND PERMITS AT LEAST ELEMENTARY MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES. I WOULD SET UP THE FOLLOWING SUBSTANTIVE UNITS AS THE HEART OF THE OPERATION:

A. NEGOTIATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS: THIS UNIT OR GROUP WOULD DEAL WITH THE WIDE RANGE OF ESSENTIALLY MULTI-LATERAL ISSUES THAT ARE NOW SO CRITICAL TO THE VENEZUELAN-US RELATIONSHIP:E.G., THE NIEU IN ITS MANY MANIFESTATIONS, THE PRODUCER-CONSUMER CONFLICT, TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN TERMS OF THE ANDEAN PACT AND THE PERENIAL PROBLEMS OF THE OAS. IT WOULD ALSO DEAL WITH OIL AS A POLICY ISSUE, BOTH BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL, BUT NOT IN ITS TECHNICAL ASPECTS. IT WOULD PROVIDE STAFF AND PARTICIPANTS WHERE NECESSARY FOR THE ALMOST ENDLESS ROUND OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES CARACAS NOW HOSTS. THE UNIT'S OBJECTIVES WOULD BE TO ENGAGE THE GOV IN A CONTINUING DIALOGUE, TO ESTABLISH AS MUCH COMMON GROUND AS POSSIBLE AND TO SUPPORT ME IN NEGOTIATING WHAT CAN BE NEGOTIATED HERE. WE MIGHT GET BY IN THIS UNIT WITH THREE OFFICERS SUPPORTED BY AN EXPERT LOCAL IF THE OFFICERS KNEW THE LABYRINTH OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES AND COULD SPEAK DECENT SPANISH. THERE WOULD BE NO, REPEAT NO, COUNSELOR OR CHIEF OF THIS UNIT. THE OFFICERS WOULD BE INTERCHANGEABLE AND FLEXIBLE; THEY WOULD WORK DIRECTLY FOR ME AND MY DEPUTY, PERHAPS ROTATING SOME FIRST-AMONG-EQUALS TITLE AS PROTOCOL OR ANY OTHER FACTORS MIGHT REQUIRE.

B. PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS: WE MIGHT MORE DELICATELY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 03 STATE 299061

CALL THIS GROUP THE "BILATERAL COOPERATION UNIT." IT WOULD PULL TOGETHER A VARIETY OF BILATERAL PROGRAMS WE NOW HAVE OR SHOULD HAVE: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING INITIATIVES, SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION, EDUCATIONAL LABOR AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES (I THINK THE STANTON REPORT HAS MUCH TO RECOMMEND IT), NARCOTICS COORDINATION AND JOINT INVESTMENT OR LENDING PROGRAMS IF THESE EVER COME ALONG. THE UNIT WOULD CARE FOR ALL THE DAY-TO-DAY BILATERAL PROBLEMS FROM CIVIL AIR TO CIVIC FUNCTIONS, EXCEPT FOR THOSE IN THE STRICTLY MILITARY, CONSULAR AND COMMERCIAL FIELDS. IT WOULD STAFF AND SUPPORT OPERATIONALLY A US-VENEZUELAN BILATERAL COMMISSION OR WORKING GROUP IF WE REACH THAT POINT. THE OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO

DEVELOP AN INTENSIFIED AND MORE BINDING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HERE I WOULD WANT A SENIOR OFFICER OF COUNELOR TO INSURE A COORDINATED TACT)CAL APPROACH--TO SEE THAT EACH OPERATION REINFORCED THE OTHERS. HE (OR SHE) WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THREE OF FOUR OFFICERS, ONE WITH AN AID BACKGROUND, ANOTHER PARTICULARLY ADEPT AT CONTACT WORK AND A THIRD QUALIFIED TO DEAL WITH FINANCIAL QUESTIONS.

C. ANALYSIS: THIS UNIT OF TWO OFFICERS WOULD DO THE TRADITIONAL REPORTING. THE VOLUME WOULD BE SMALLER. THE EMPHASIS WOULD BE ON THE GOV'S FOREIGN RELATIONS, INCLUDING OPEC PARTICIPATION, AND ON SIGNIFICANT SHIFTS IN THE LOCAL POWER STRUCTURE. THE UNIT WOULD RUN A CLIPPING SERVICE FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO COVER DAY TO DAY EVENTS AND WHEN NECESSARY WOULD IDENTIFY FOR WASHINGTON AGENCIES PUBLISHED SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON SUCH MATTERS AS MACRO-ECONOMIC TRENDS.

D. COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS: THE COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR HERE HAS POINTED OUT THAT THE BULK OF VENEZUELA'S MASSIVE ' IMPORT PURCHASES FOR DEVELOPMENT WILL HAVE BEEN CONTRACTED WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS. WE ARE SADLY UNDERSTAFFED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY. FURTHER, THE COMMERCIAL SECTION SPENDS FAR TOO MUCH TIME ON MEETING THE LESS CONSEQUENTIAL WASHINGTON REQUIREMENTS AND ON WRESTLING WITH SHIPPING, CIVIL-AIR AND OTHER PROBLEMS UNRELATED TO THE DIRECT SALE OF US GOODS. THE COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR BELIEVES, AND I AGREE, THAT WHAT WE NEED HERE IS A TASK FORCE APPROACH--A FAIRLY SIZEABLE GROUP OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 STATE 299061

SPECIALISTS TO BE ASSIGNED TO CARACAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING MAXIMUM US EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES DURING THIS RELATIVELY BRIEF PERIOD OF HEAVY VENEZUELAN BUYING. WE WILL BE SUBMITTING TO YOU A SEPARATE MEMORANDUM WITH A DETAILED PROPOSAL ON THAT SCORE.

E. CONSULAR: STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS GIVE US LITTLE ROOM FOR MANEUVER IN THIS FIELD. EMBASSY CARACAS IS RATHER COMFORTABLY STAFFED ON THE CONSULAR SIDE. THE RESULT IS REASONABLY GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS IN AN AREA WHERE WE SUFFER BADLY ELSEWHERE. IN MY JUDGEMENT THE DEPT HAS DEVOTED INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES AND ATTENTION TO CONSULAR OPERATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA. I ALSO THINK OVER-SPECIALIZATION HAS BEEN HARMFUL IN THIS ZONE (OR CONE). THE REVIVAL OF RATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR JUNIOR OFFICERS COULD HELP US MOVE TOWARD A BETTER INTEGRATION OF THE CONSULAR FUNCTION INTO OUR REGULAR OPERATIONS. AS FOR CARACAS, MY ONLY SUGGESTION AT THE MOMENT IS THAT THE CONSULATE HERE BE HOOKED INTO THE COMPUTERIZED LOOK-OUT SYSTEM AS A TIME AND MONEY-SAVING STEP.

F. ADMINISTRATION: I AM NOT AT ALL CLEAR ON WHERE I WOULD START IN STRUCTURING ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

SERVICES FOR THIS EMBASSY. AS IT IS, THE SECTION LOOMS LARGE IN NUMBERS AND I WONDER HERE AS ELSEWHERE WHETHER WE SPEND TOO MUCH TIME AND MONEY ADMINISTERING ONE ANOTHER. YET LOOKING AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART I HAVE TO ASSUME, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IN FACT THE EXIGENCIES OF THE WASHINGTON PROCESS DO REQUIRE FIVE FSL ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS TO PREPARE AND REVIEW OUR VOUCHERS. MY PAST EXPERIENCE HAS LEFT ME WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT IT IS EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT TO CUT ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL FROM EMBASSY STAFFS WITHOUT FIRST ELIMINATING SUBSTANTIVE FUNCTIONS AND SLOTS, BOTH OURS AND THOSE OF OTHER AGENCIES. IF WE WERE TO PROCEED TO A GENERAL SLIMMING-DOWN HERE, WE COULD THEN TACKLE A STREAMLINING OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES. IN ANY EVENT, I WILL GIVE MORE THOUGHT AND A CLOSER LOOK AT THIS AREA AS TIME PERMITS.

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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PAGE 05 STATE 299061

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9356

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 CARACAS 6880

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3. TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE MORE PARTICULAR QUESTIONS IN YOUR CABLE:

A. STAFFING: REPROGRAMMING, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO STAFF ARE GENERALLY COVERED BY MY RESTRUCTURING PROPOSAL. TOURS OF DUTY ARE PROBABLY ABOUT RIGHT BUT WE NEED MORE MANAGEMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS FROM THE DEPT. PEOPLE AT THIS EMBASSY SEEM TO ARRIVE AND LEAVE IN BUNCHES RATHER THAN ON THE STAGGERED BASIS THAT WOULD GIVE US CONTINUITY AND INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY. IT IS PROVING DIFFICULT TO KEEP UP TO SPEED HERE THIS SUMMER AS SO MANY OFFICERS REACHED HOME-LEAVE OR TRANSFER ELIGIBILITY AT THE SAME TIME. ON OFFICER QUALIFICATION AND TRAINING WE NEED BOTH GREATER VERSATILITY AND MORE SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE. ALL THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OFFICERS AT THIS POST SHOULD BE WELL-GROUNDED IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES THAT ARE NOW THE POLITICAL STUFF OF OUR RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA. WE DO NOT NEED MACRO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OR POLITICAL HISTORIANS; WE DO REQUIRE OFFICERS WHO CAN UNDERSTAND THE LARGER ISSUES AND HOW THEY PLAY OUT INTERNATIONALLY AND AT HOME. PERHAPS CEPAL COULD HELP US SET UP A SHORT COURSE ON PREBISCH, THE THEORY OF DEPENDENCY,

"INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT" AND THE LIKE. ANOTHER CRITICAL QUALIFICATION HERE IS THE CAPABILITY TO PURSUE OBJECTIVES THROUGH INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS--HEAD TO HEAD CONTACT WORK. ONE STEP IN ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THAT KIND OF TALENT MIGHT BE TO DEEMPHASIZE "EXECUTIVE ABILITY" AS THE SINGLE OVERRIDING CRITERION FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE, TOO MANY OFFICERS THINK GOOD MANAGERS ARE PEOPLE WHO SHUFFLE PAPER EFFICIENTLY AND DELEGATE GENEROUSLY. IN LATIN AMERICAN THE BOTTOM LINE IS HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, AND THESE ARE NOT DEVELOPED BY SHUFFLING PAPERS.

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PAGE 06 STATE 299061

B. OTHER AGENCIES; SINCE CARACAS IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE CITY IN LATIN AMERICA, I FIND IT HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHY OTHER USG AGENCIES CHOOSE TO ESTABLISH REGIONAL OPERATIONS HERE. THEY SHOULD LOOK AT THE COST-BENEFIT RATIO IN TERMS OF GOOD AIR CONNECTIONS AND CENTRAL LOCATION AS OPPOSED TO WHAT MUST BE CONSIDERABLY HIGHER OVERHEAD. OTHERWISE, THE PROBLEMS HERE ARE ABOUT AS THEY ARE ELSEWHERE. THE US MILITARY COMPLEMENT HERE (MINUS THE MARINES) COMES TO 52 PEOPLE, OR ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF OUR AMERICAN PERSONNEL--AND THIS AT A TIME WHEN WE HAVE PROBABLY REACHED THE END OF EVEN FMS CREDITS IN VENEZUELA. THE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP SIMPLY DOES NOT JUSTIFY THAT KIND OF A PRESENCE.

C. HOUSING; THE PROBLEM IS COST. RENTS KEEP GOING UP. DECENT HOUSING FOR OUR PEOPLE IS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN MORALE AND EFFECTIVENESS. WE HAVE MADE DO REASONABLY WELL SO FAR; BUT, AGAIN, THE HIGH COSTS INVOLVED SUGGEST A CLOSE LOOK AT STAFFING LEVELS. IT IS NOT MY IMPRESSION THAT USG EMPLOYEES IN CARACAS DEPEND TO ANY SIGNIFICANT DEGREE ON EMBASSY ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES. I SHALL EXAMINE THAT QUESTION AS TIME PERMITS, AS I WILL FSL STAFFING AND POSSIBLE GREATER USE OF DEPENDENTS WITH TRAINING.

D. MANAGEMENT: AS INDICATED PREVIOUSLY, THE TRADITIONAL EMBASSY STRUCTURE DOES NOT SEEM TO ME TO MEET OUR REQUIREMENTS IN CARACAS. BUT A DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION OF SENIOR RANK AND ABILITIES IS ESSENTIAL. THIS MISSION IS TOO LARGE AND DEMANDS ON MY TIME ARE TOO GREAT TO LEAVE THE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS TO THE SECTION CHIEFS. I HAVE PREVIOUSLY ADDRESSED MYSELF AS BEST I COULD TO REPORTING AND ADMINISTRATIVE STREAMLINING. AS FOR OUR ONE CONSULAR POST, IT HAS UNFORTUNATELY EVOLVED SINCE REOPENING A FEW YEARS BACK INTO A "SPECIAL PURPOSE POST," BUT THE PURPOSE BEING CONSULAR SERVICES AND NOTHING ELSE. CONSULATE MARACAIBO IS NOW ALL BUT ISOLATED FROM US AND FROM WASHINGTON WITH THE END OF EVEN REGULAR COURIER SERVICE, I THINK WE PROBABLY NEED A CONSULATE THERE, BUT DO NOT

FAVOR MAINTAINING THE POST UNLESS IT CAN BE GIVEN THE
FACILITIES--PARTICULARLY COMMUNICATIONS--TO FOSTER THE
FULL RANGE OF US INTERESTS IN VENEZUELA'S RICHEST REGION.
I DO NOT THINK THAT CONVERTING THE CONSULATE INTO THE
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PAGE 07 STATE 299061

OTHER TYPE OF SPECIAL INTEREST POST BY TRANSFERRING THE
CONSULAR FUNCTIONS HERE WOULD WORK. THE LOCAL PRESSURE ON
ANY REMAINING US OFFICE TO OFFER CONSULAR SERVICES WOULD
AS A PRACTICAL MATTER BE TOO GREAT.

4. I APOLOGIZE FOR BEING LATE WITH THIS; I DO ASSURE
YOU BOTH OF MY INTEREST IN YOUR PROJECT AND MY COMPLETE
DISPOSITION TO CONTRIBUTE FURTHER TO IT WHENEVER YOU
MIGHT FIND THAT USEFUL. SHLAUDEMANN UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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